



Know the Facts

The “Begin in ‘10” plan marks the culmination of two years of work by two task forces appointed by State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex to make recommendations about reforming and improving the three-decades-old way we fund our public schools and raise resources to meet the state’s priorities, including education. So what are the key elements of this plan?

1. Paves the way for a new **Foundation Program** to ensure that every student receives a high quality education and that our schools are turning out Twenty-first Century Graduates.
2. Realigns dozens of individual line items in the budget and creates a new **Student-centered Funding System** that ensures that districts and the schools have the flexibility to use resources in ways that best meet the needs of the students in their communities.
3. Puts in place a **weighting for poverty**, because we know that it costs more to educate students who come from impoverished backgrounds.
4. Paves the way for raising teacher salaries through a 21st Century Foundation program and reforms the outdated system currently in place that is not adequate for the Twenty-first Century.
5. Extends full day **four-year-old kindergarten** to all at-risk students.
6. Provides **grants to districts for innovative practices** that get results.
7. **Creates a Commission** to reinvent South Carolina’s tax structure.
8. Establishes a **statewide uniform foundation millage** rate to ensure stable local support for public schools.

Q: Why does South Carolina need this plan?

A: South Carolina needs a funding system that is adequate, efficient, transparent, secure, and sustainable for the future. This plan puts the foundation of this plan in place in 2010 and sets the stage for comprehensive reform over the next few years.

Q: How can South Carolina afford to do this in this time of economic crisis?

A: It’s South Carolina’s well-intended, but outdated education funding and tax structure that have, in part, created this budget crisis in the first place. Yes, we need to address immediate needs, but we can’t lose sight of where we need to go as a state. Comprehensive tax and funding reform is the only thing that gets us there and ensures that South Carolina’s public schools are graduating students who are prepared for the Twenty-first Century workplace.

Q: So what do I need to ask policy makers to do?

A: First, in order to address the current budget crisis, the legislature must give flexibility to districts to decide how to spend money to best help kids. Second, in order to maintain the viability of our public schools, they must restore the cuts that have been made when they design the 2010 budget. Finally, they must pass the “Begin in ‘10” plan to put in place a comprehensive system for ensuring fair and adequate funding for the future and 21st Century graduates.

